

RESURRECTION OR RESUSCITATION?

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION STANDS UNIQUE AMONG ALL THE OTHER SEEMINGLY SIMILAR CASES AND CLAIMS. **DOMENIC MARBANIANG** OFFERS TWENTY DIFFERENCES.



Stories of people coming back to life after death that lasted from 3 hours to 3 days have hit the newspapers, TV news and Internet time and again. There are numerous cases of people being revived by medical means and cases of those who were raised from the dead supernaturally. Many such incidents leave the medical doctors baffled and others puzzled. But then, the question is also if such cases are common, what makes Christ's resurrection so unique? How is it different from any other instance

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of a person coming back to life? The Bible also records cases of people who were raised from the dead: the son of the widow of Zarephath, raised by Elijah in 1 Kings 17: 7-24; Jairus's daughter in Matthew 9: 18-26, the son of the widow of Nain in Luke 7: 11-17, and Lazarus in John 11: 38-44, raised by Jesus; Tabitha in Acts 9: 40 by Peter, and Eutychus by Paul in Acts 20: 7-12.

For the sake of clarity, let's call the other cases of people coming back to life in the same body, or the miraculous reviving of the body as "resuscitation" and distinguish it from the "resurrection" of Jesus Christ.

Let me point out at least 20 differences between resurrection and resuscitation:

1. The resurrection of Jesus was permanent and everlasting (Rom. 6: 9); however, resuscitation was temporary. Even those who were raised from the dead in the Bible died a mortal's death later on.
2. The resurrection of Jesus transformed His flesh in a supernatural way. Jesus could pass through locked doors (John 20: 19), travel faster than anything (Matt. 28: 7), and was free from the laws of nature (1 Cor. 15: 44); however, in resuscitation there is no such change in the human body.

- 3.** The resurrection of Jesus transformed His body to become imperishable, glorious, invincible, and spiritual (1 Cor. 15: 42-44); in resuscitation, the body still is perishable, vile, and subject to the material laws of thermodynamics.
- 4.** The resurrection of Jesus transformed His body for ascension to the right hand of God as the Second Man and as heir of all things (1 Cor. 15: 47-50; Rom. 1: 4; Heb. 1: 2-4; Rev. 19: 15); the resuscitated body in its unchanged condition cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15: 50).
- 5.** In His resurrection Jesus became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [died] (1 Cor. 15: 20, 23); all those raised from the dead otherwise are not counted as part of this order of "new creation" resurrection.
- 6.** In His resurrection, Jesus became the antitype of Adam; so that while in the latter all died because of his sin, now through the righteousness of Christ those who believe in Him will be made alive (1 Cor. 15: 22; Rom. 5: 17, 18). Resuscitation is the mere reviving of a body without any connection to the typology of Adam.
- 7.** In His resurrection, Jesus became the author of new life (Rom. 6: 4); resuscitations are only revival to the old Adamic life, biologically speaking.
- 8.** In His resurrection, Jesus conquered death so that death has no longer any dominion over Him (Rom. 6: 9; 8: 3; 1 Cor. 15: 55-57); all the others who were only resuscitated were still subject to physical death.
- 9.** Jesus claimed that He had power to lay down His life and take it back again (John 10: 18); those raised otherwise cannot make that claim.
- 10.** The death and resurrection of Jesus had cosmic ("in Him"), creational ("die... live"), and salvific ("those who believe")

"The resurrection of Jesus was permanent and everlasting"

significance (Rom. 7: 4); the raising from the dead of others had no cosmic, creational, and salvific significance.

- 11.** The death and resurrection of Jesus was eschatological, in that it was the firstfruits that guaranteed, at the end of the age, the resurrection of those who died in Christ (1 Cor. 15: 23, 24, 26); that of those raised otherwise had no such eschatological significance.
- 12.** The resurrection of Jesus was in the power and might of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1: 4; 8: 11; Phil. 3: 10) – remember, the angel didn't roll away the stone for Jesus to get out, but for the women to get in; in raising from the dead, otherwise, the body would still be weak (Mark 5: 43; John 11: 44).
- 13.** In the resurrection of Jesus, His body was sown in weakness but raised in power (1 Cor. 15: 43); in resuscitations, the body may not even be considered sown and raised in such categories that can only be applied to the resurrection of Jesus, and then the body is still weak.
- 14.** The resurrection of Jesus transformed His body to become free from the need of physical sustenance by food and drink (though, He could still eat, Luke 24: 42, 43); those raised otherwise still needed food, drink, shelter, and air to live (Mark 5: 43).
- 15.** The resurrection of Jesus provided hope of eternal life and defined the totality of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15: 17-20); the resuscitations of others were just personal experiences.
- 16.** In the resurrection of Jesus, His body was transformed according to the supernatural energetic power by which He subdues all things unto Himself (Phil. 3: 21); the resuscitations only revived the body but didn't subdue anything.
- 17.** The resurrection of Jesus is the soteriological ground for the Holy Spirit to work in our bodies to give us

victory over sin (Rom. 8: 11-14); the other resuscitations were mere physical reviving of bodies with no soteriological significance.

18. The resurrection of Jesus was a sign of life or death – it obligated people to respond to the crucified and risen Saviour (Matt. 12: 39,40; Rom. 10: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 21); the resuscitations were not necessary signs of any such or other kind – for instance, in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Abraham didn't respond to the rich man's request to send Lazarus back from the dead as a sign; because according to him, the Scriptures had more authority than the testimony of someone raised from the dead (Luke 16: 30,31).

19. The resurrection of Jesus made His body spiritual (1 Cor.15: 44), so that though He has flesh and bones (Luke 24: 39), He is called a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor.15: 45); but, those merely resuscitated

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are still raised in their natural (breathing, GK. *psuchikos*) bodies subject to the laws of physical nature. (Note the contrast in 1 Cor.15: 45, “The first man Adam became a breathing creature, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (rendition mine), suggesting that the resurrected body of Jesus is not a breathing but a fully spiritual body).

20. The resurrection of Jesus is the ontological basis for not only the resurrection of those who die in Him, but also for the glorification of the bodies of those who are still alive at His coming (1 Cor.15: 51,52; Phil. 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2); the resuscitations were only shadowy and unparticular and anyone raised from the dead, not in order of the resurrection of Jesus, can only be saved and glorified by becoming part of the eschatological resurrection that the resurrection of Jesus provides ground for and promises, i.e., the resurrection of new creation (Heb. 11: 35).



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